REMARKS

The Final Office Action of February 23, 2007 has been considered by the Applicants. No claims are amended or cancelled. Claims 1, 5-16, and 20-32 are pending. Reconsideration of the Application is requested.

The 103(a) rejection of claims 1, 5-12, 16, 20-27, and 30-32 over Fuller and Deubzer was maintained. Applicants traverse the rejection.

There is no motivation to combine Fuller and Deubzer. According to the Examiner on page 7 of the current Office Action:

> Fuller... teaches that hydrolysis is performed in the presence of a basic catalyst, but fails to teach or suggest... wherein the basic catalyst is a quaternary ammonium salt.
>
> Deubzer et al disclose that conventional basic catalysts in any hydrolysis reaction include...
>
> As cited above, the reference employs THF as a solvent in the reaction mixture, thus meeting the limitations of the instant claims.
>
> ...it would have been obvious to prepare the material of Fuller et al choosing to use the catalysts taught by Deubzer et al as the basic catalysts with reasonable expectation of preparing a material having decreased coating defects.

All four statements are incorrect.

Fuller does not teach that hydrolysis is performed in the presence of a *basic catalyst*. The Examiner agreed with this statement in the Office Action of October 18, 2005, in paragraph 5, bridging pages 8 and 9 of that Office Action. There, the Examiner dropped the 102 rejection and rejected the claims under § 103(a). As previously noted, the borane catalyst taught by Fuller is an acidic catalyst and requires reaction conditions different from that of a basic catalyst. The Examiner has not shown where the cited references teach that poly(vinylbenzyl alcohol) can be prepared using a basic catalyst. Instead, the Examiner has assumed that if one can use an acidic catalyst, one can use a basic catalyst. This assumption is incorrect.

Deubzer does not disclose conventional basic catalysts suitable for *any* hydrolysis reaction. He discloses basic catalysts suitable for his hydrolysis reaction only.

THF is not a solvent in the instant claims. Thus, the limitations of the instant claims are not met.

There is no motivation to combine the claims because the references teach away from their combination. In particular, Deubzer explicitly teaches that his basic catalysts cannot be used with water-miscible solvents. See col. 3, lines 55-65. The solvent recited in the instant claims, pyridine, is water-miscible. Fuller uses water, methanol, and THF as solvents: they are all water-miscible. Thus, Deubzer teaches away from the use of his basic catalysts in the reaction of Fuller.

In the Response to Arguments on page 9 of the current Office Action, the Examiner stated that Fuller employs a catalyst known in the art to function in a hydrolysis reaction and is not limited to only the catalyst he uses. In response, Applicants state that this interpretation fails to consider the reference as a whole. See MPEP § 2141(II)(B). It ignores the remainder of the system and whether the other components are compatible with a basic catalyst. The Examiner has failed to consider whether the catalyst of Deubzer and solvent of Fuller are compatible; they are not. The Examiner also stated that one would have been motivated to add a basic catalyst as taught by the secondary references to increase the yield of the desired product. Deubzer does not teach that the use of a basic catalyst increases the yield compared to a borane catalyst. Only the instant application does. To the extent the Examiner's rejection is based on this motivation, Applicants submit this is improper hindsight reasoning afforded by the claimed invention. See MPEP § 2141(II)(C).

Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection based on Fuller and Deubzer.

The 103(a) rejection of claims 1, 5-14, 16, 20-22, and 28-32 over Fuller and Pinschmidt, Jr. was maintained. Applicants traverse the rejection.

There is no motivation to combine the references. Both Fuller and Pinschmidt, Jr. teach and suggest the use of an acid catalyst. Pinschmidt, Jr., for example, teaches

that his reaction proceeds best within a pH range of 3 to 7, and at most 3.0 to 8.0. See col. 5, lines 50-65. Use of pyridine as a solvent would fall outside of that range. Thus, neither reference provides motivation to use a basic catalyst.

In the Response to Arguments, the Examiner generally stated that one would have been motivated to add a basic catalyst as taught by the secondary references to increase the yield of the desired product. Pinschmidt, Jr. does not teach that the use of a basic catalyst increases the yield. Only the instant application does. To the extent the Examiner's rejection is based on this motivation, Applicants submit this is improper hindsight reasoning afforded by the claimed invention. See MPEP § 2141(II)(C).

Applicants request withdrawal of the 103(a) rejection over Fuller and Pinschmidt, Jr.

The 103(a) rejection of claim 1-14, 16, 17, 19-22, and 28-32 over Fuller in view of Sato was maintained. Applicants traverse the rejection.

Applicants have made specific arguments as to this rejection and the Examiner has never replied to them, relying instead on generalities. Applicants request the Examiner's aid by further explaining the remaining basis for the rejection based on Fuller in view of Sato so that Applicants can present new remarks or otherwise advance the prosecution of this rejection. Applicants include, again, the specific arguments made in the past for the Examiner's consideration.

The Examiner previously stated that Sato is relied upon simply for its teaching of solvents (i.e. pyridine) suitable for use in similar reactions. This teaching does not provide motivation to combine the references. MPEP § 2143.01. Sato does not teach the use of pyridine as a solvent; he teaches the use of pyridine as a catalyst between two specific reactants. Neither reactant is similar to poly(vinylbenzyl acetate) and the Examiner has not shown where Fuller or Sato explains how a catalyst suitable for those reactants is suitable for poly(vinylbenzyl acetate). Also, a solvent and a catalyst perform different functions and the recitation of pyridine as a catalyst would not suggest its use as a solvent to one of ordinary skill in the art. The teaching of pyridine as a catalyst also teaches away from its use as a solvent in order to prevent unwanted or

unexpected chemical reactions from occurring. Therefore, the combination of Fuller and Sato would not render obvious the instant claims.

For these reasons, Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection based on Fuller combined with Sato.

CONCLUSION

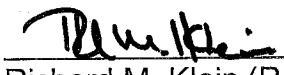
For the reasons given above, Applicants submit the pending claims (1, 5-16, and 20-32) are in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the rejections and issuance of a Notice of Allowance is requested.

In the event the Examiner considers personal contact advantageous to the disposition of this case, she is hereby authorized to call Richard M. Klein, at telephone number 216-861-5582, Cleveland, OH.

It is believed that no fee is due in conjunction with this response. If, however, it is determined that fees are due, authorization is hereby given for deduction of those fees, other than the issue fees, from Deposit Account No. 24-0037.

Respectfully submitted,

FAY SHARPE LLP



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